

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06815 060509Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P R 051614Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1448

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6815

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: USG INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS

1. BEIRUT DAILY L'ORIENT LE JOUR CARRIED TWO ARTICLES
IN ITS ISSUE AUG. 5 CONCERNING U.S. POLICY VIS-A-VIS LEBANESE
CRISIS.

2. THE FIRST QUOTES MR. JOSEPH SISCO, WHO IS IDENTIFIED AS
FORMER "NO. 3" IN DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WITH RESPONSIBILITY
FOR NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, AS STATING IN AN INTERVIEW WITH
RADIO ISRAEL THAT "THE WEAKENING OF THE PLO AS A RESULT
OF EVENTS IN LEBANON OPENS NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR A SOLUTION
OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT." THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO SAY
THAT MR. SISCO DEFENDED THE STEP-BY-STEP POLICY SAYING
"NO OTHER WAS POSSIBLE AT THE MOMENT WHEN THE
AGREEMENTS, BETWEEN ISRAEL ON THE ONE HAND AND
SYRIA AND EGYPT ON THE OTHER, WERE CONCLUDED. OF
COURSE, IT IS NECESSARY NOW TO TRY TO FIND AN OVERALL
SOLUTION, BUT ONE SHOULD NOT AUTOMATICALLY EXCLUDE
NEW PARTIAL AGREEMENTS WHICH PERMIT PROGRESS ALONG
THE ROAD TOWARDS AN OVERALL SOLUTION."

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 06815 060509Z

3. THE SECOND STORY STATES THAT THE USG HAS WARNED

SYRIA ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECENT SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN CEASEFIRE IN LEBANON. REFERRING TO EARLIER STORIES IN "CERTAIN LEFTIST LEBANESE DAILIES, "WHICH IN TURN HAD CITED AN "ARAB DIPLOMATIC SOURCE," THIS ARTICLE CLAIMS THAT AMBASSADOR ROBERT (SIC) MURPHY INFORMED THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT THAT THE APPLICATION OF THE SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN CEASEFIRE SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THREE FACTORS: (1) THE NECESSITY OF AGREEMENT WITH SAUDI ARABIA REGARDING THE FUTURE OF LEBANON AND THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE; (2) THE HOSTILITY OF ISRAEL TO ANY AGREEMENT WHICH REACTIVATES THE CAIRO ACCORD IN A WAY THAT AUTHORIZES THE PALESTINIANS TO OPERATE IN ISRAEL FROM LEBANON; AND (3) THE NECESSITY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWPOINTS OF EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL AS ISRAEL WITHOUT IGNORING THE NEEDS OF LEBANON "WHICH ARE COMPATIBLE" ("QUI VONT DANS LE MEME SENS").

4. THE SAME SOURCE SAYS THAT CERTAIN STEPS "HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN CASE SYRIA REFUSES TO CONSIDER THESE FACTORS, NOTABLY A NEW GENERALIZED WAR IN LEBANON, WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A NEW EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN THE FORCES PRESENT. THE INTERVENTION OF SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT, SUPPORTED BY THE U.S., WOULD THEN BE SOLICITED BY ALL THE PARTIES AFTER THE FAILURE OF ALL PEACE INITIATIVES, PARTICULARLY THE SYRIAN EFFORT."

5. COMMENT. MR. SISCO'S REMARKS HAVE ALREADY BEEN NOTED HERE, AND WE HAVE BEEN ASKED WHETHER THEY REPRESENT U.S. POLICY; THAT IS, IF USG'S GOAL IS TO WEAKEN THE PLO.
HUNT

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